

Earlier this year, in February 2003, the United States Department of Agriculture evaluated this program, and the conclusions were overwhelmingly positive. In addition to significantly reducing the incidence of hunger among school-age children, the program was also found to promote educational opportunity, especially for girls, among some of the poorest populations in the world.

Sadly, in fiscal year 2003, McGovern-Dole received only \$100 million in funding, reducing the number of children served to scarcely more than 2 million world-wide in just 28 countries. In fiscal year 2004, President Bush only asked for \$50 million, and if this allocation remains unaltered, the United States will literally be taking food out of the mouths of yet another one million hungry children and forcing their families to remove them from school.

The senior Senator from Kansas and chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, PAT ROBERTS, a leading proponent of the McGovern-Dole program in the other body, has stated on a number of occasions his belief that this program serves our national security interests by attacking the breeding grounds of terrorism, hunger, poverty, ignorance and despair, while at the same time ensuring that children receive meals in settings where they receive a quality education, rather than hate-filled indoctrination.

I could not agree more. But rather than expanding this program to reach even more school-aged children, to help stabilize communities devastated by HIV-AIDS, and to support HIV-AIDS orphans so they might contribute to the future of their nations rather than burden them, we are cutting it again.

On November 26, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization released its 2003 report on hunger. It found that after falling steadily during the 1990s, hunger is again on the rise. In the developing world, the number of malnourished people grew by an average of 4.5 million a year for the past 3 years. The report also found that hunger exacerbates the AIDS crisis, drives rural people into the cities, and forces women and children to trade sex for food and money.

Yet over the past 3 years, we have cut funding for the McGovern-Dole school feeding program so it is now one-sixth of what it once was. This is a disgrace, plain and simple.

Mr. Speaker, we are going in the wrong direction, not just for the children of the world, but for the security of our own Nation. I call on President Bush and congressional leadership to restore full funding in fiscal year 2005 to the George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education Program.

A WORTHWHILE PROPOSAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, much has been written lately about several attempts to craft an alternative peace plan in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian dispute. The best-known of these recent plans, the Geneva Initiative, was conceived and written by representatives of both sides of the conflict but without the involvement of governments or politicians. As such, it is a fresh approach that should provide a lesson to those who continue to believe that peace is something that can only be crafted by government officials or bribed or bullied by the international community.

We do know this: After decades of conflict and tens of billions of U.S. tax dollars spent, U.S. Government involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has led nowhere. The latest U.S. Government-initiated plan for peace, the road map, appears to be a map to nowhere. This does not surprise me much. With a seemingly endless amount of money to bribe the two leaders of the two opposing sides to remain engaged in the process, is it any wonder why the two parties never arrive at peace?

But people on both sides are becoming more and more frustrated at the endless impasse and endless government and bureaucrat-written peace agreements that go nowhere.

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That is why plans like this should be of such interest. Initially conceived by an obscure Swiss professor, the project was joined by former Israeli Justice Minister, Yossi Beilin, former Palestinian Authority Information Minister, Yasser Abed Rabbo, and by other prominent officials like former President Jimmy Carter. The negotiations led to the creation of a 50-page detailed accord.

I do not know whether the product is perfect. I have not studied the minute details of the proposal. But what I do know is that politicians, governments, and special interests promote war at the expense of those who have to fight them. Wars end when the victims finally demand peace, and that is what we are beginning to see. According to one recent survey, a majority among both the Israeli and Palestinian populations support this new initiative. That is encouraging. To his credit, President Bush has demonstrated an open mind toward this alternative approach. He declared the Geneva Initiative "productive" and added that the United States "appreciates people discussing peace." Secretary of State Colin Powell echoed the President when he resisted hard-line pressure to ignore the proposed accord stating, "I have an obligation to listen to individuals who have interesting ideas." This is also encouraging.

Predictably, though, this new approach is not as welcomed by those governments, politicians, and special interests who have a stake in dragging out the process indefinitely. Pales-

tinian Authority President Yasser Arafat has been lukewarm at best. Extremist Arab organizations who have a special interest in continuing the violence have also rejected the Geneva Initiative. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has rejected the initiative out of hand. Said Mr. Sharon, "Geneva is an attempt to do something only a government can do."

But the point is that governments have little incentive to finally end conflicts such as these. The United States is in places like Kosovo and Bosnia indefinitely in the name of peacekeeping and peace processes. The same will be true of our involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is not until foreign involvement ceases, that means our continued meddling in the Middle East, and the people directly involved demand peace, do real working solutions begin to emerge. The Geneva Initiative is therefore a positive step toward peace in the Middle East. Let us step back and get out of the way.

CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT LEAVES MANY VICTIMS IN ITS WAKE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RENZI). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was December 7, known as the Day of Infamy, so named by the great President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Mr. Speaker, I suggest this evening that this day is a kind of day of infamy for this House, particularly with the passage of this conference report. This conference report contains within it so many violations of basic democracy in this House that this day will not soon be forgotten, which is why I make the analogy that I did.

The conference report leaves many victims in its wake. Let me name just a few of them. It is a 50/50 country. But if you were not of the majority party, if you are among the independents, you had little participation in this final product. Or if you happened to live in the wrong State or the wrong district, even though it might be closely held, you will look long and hard before finding your place in this conference report.

And help you, help you if you are in the low or middle classes of our country because you have been sacrificed time and time again in this report to big corporations, to wealthy Americans. If you are among the millions of what I call the disfavored elderly who will get little or no help from the prescription drug Medicare bill, you will not find yourselves among the bills we have passed this year on prescription drugs. The most unfortunate of you are the long-term unemployed. Unbelievably, this is the second Christmas Congress has gone home to leave the long-term unemployed with no relief to face the Christmas and the new year with a